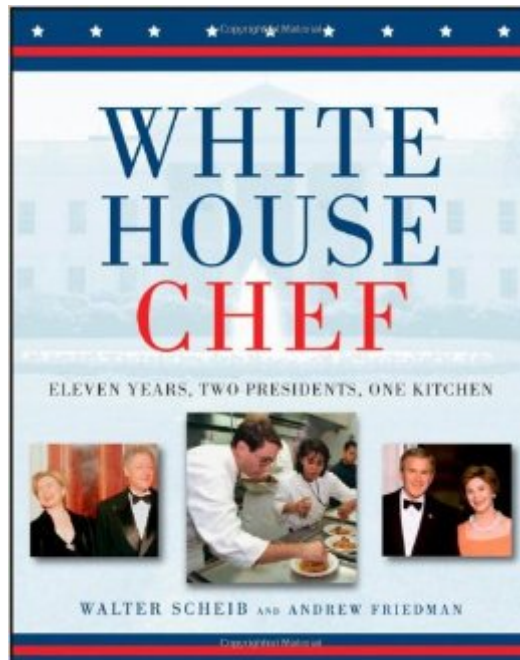


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White House Chef: Eleven Years, Two Presidents, One Kitchen



Synopsis

"An engaging book about life at the Executive Mansion. . . . Hillary Clinton had charged this fiercely competitive, meticulously organized chef with bringing 'what's best about American food, wine, and entertaining to the White House.' His sophisticated contemporary food was generally considered some of the best ever served there."--Marian Burros, New York Times

White House Chef Join Walter Scheib as he serves up a taste--in stories and recipes--of his eleven years as White House chef under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Scheib takes readers along on his whirlwind adventure, from his challenging audition process right up until his controversial departure. He describes his approach to meals ranging from the intimate (rooftop parties and surprise birthday celebrations for the Clintons; Tex-Mex brunches for the Bushes) to his creative approach to bringing contemporary American cuisine to the "people's house" (including innovative ways to serve state dinners for up to seven hundred people and picnics and holiday menus for several thousand guests). Scheib goes beyond the kitchen and his job as chef. He shares what it is like to be part of President Clinton's motorcade (the "security bubble") and inside the White House during 9/11, revealing how he first evacuates his staff and then comes back to fix meals for hundreds of hungry security and rescue personnel. Staying cool under pressure also helps Scheib in other aspects of his job, such as withstanding the often-changing "temperature" of the White House and satisfying the culinary sensibilities of two very different first families.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Walter Scheib's *White House Chef* is a fascinating and compelling memoir of the inner workings of the White House kitchen and what it takes to be the Executive Chef of the House. After reading the book, I was greatly encouraged that this was not yet another tabloid infused penning of the lives of high profile people. It reads as a forthright account about Chef Scheib's personal interactions with the First Families and his kitchen family in both daily events and even the life-harrowing event of 911. The Chef's retelling of what it was like to be in the White House during September 11 is not to be missed. In addition to reading the book, I thought it was important to experience the Chef's cuisine. As a professional cook, I sought out to test the recipes in my kitchen and see if they actually work. Both the Cream of Celery Root Soup and the Thai-Spiced Sweet Potato Soup with Gingered Bok Choy were absolutely fabulous. The Cream of Celery Root Soup could easily be adapted for Vegans (by the omission of cream) and still taste great. The last dish I cooked was the Curried Chicken with Basmati. It is an incredibly aromatic dish that is both satisfying and flavorful. I did have to tweak the seasonings and the directions because I increased the proportion size quite a bit. In fact, I used the recipe for a catering. I simply replaced the whole chicken with chicken breasts. The dish was gone in no time and received some very positive reviews.

As the Camp David Executive Chef for three years (standard military tour) I am thrilled to see my boss with such a wonderful book. He has done a beautiful job with it! The recipes are WOW and the story is REAL. I wish there had been dozens of pages of color food photographs but the photos enclosed of people and story is more than enough to get FIVE STARS! Walter is a wonderful and loving person always interested in doing right and well. A great leader and realistic manager of peace and productivity. The book as was written by Mr. Friedman is interesting and electrifying to read. It seems like everyone involved did a super good job of teamwork. Typical for normal people doing extra-ordinary results! As a cookbook with awesome recipes - enjoy! As a storybook with fascinating anecdotes - enjoy!

Scheib has given us a pretty good look into the life of a White House chef under two administrations: one (the Clintons) that really wanted to make the White House into a place of entertainment and a place to show off America's best foods, and one that, well, isn't interested in that. The recipes are good, interesting, and worth the cost of the book as well. But what I find most interesting in the book, and what I was most hoping for when I ordered it, was a look at the non-flashy daily grind of life in the White House, and Scheib provides us many anecdotes, from Bill Clinton ordering huge steaks when his wife was away, to George Bush popping his head into the

kitchen after a run and asking "What's for lunch?" I enjoyed the stories of the giant dinners and elegant soirees, but it was the daily stuff I found most interesting: where the First Families enjoyed eating, their comfort foods, Chelsea Clinton making cookies with friends, Chelsea's first adult-style evening of entertaining, Scheib fighting with the purchasing staff to get better quality produce, that Bush likes his toasted cheese sandwiches cut at an angle, how the White House staff fill the elevator at lunch time making it difficult for the chef to get food to the president while still hot, the personalities of different people, and so on. While it is a world famous house, with incredibly important stuff going on, it's still a workplace for many with all the personality adventures of a workplace, and it's also home for one family that, for the most part, act like any other family or any other people. That is the aspect of the book I most appreciated, and which I wish had a lot more. I also appreciate that Scheib refused to dish dirt on either family, or use the book as avenue to embarrass or sensationalize. While the book is wonderful as it is, I think that a book about more than a decade in the White House deserves a lot more text. It reads much too quickly for subject matter that is this interesting and fascinating. Color photographs would have been more appropriate, too. "White House Chef" shows some of the excitement of the big state dinners and other large entertainments, but is mostly an intimate look at some of the daily grind of the presidential family and the White House. Although we cannot all be president, we all eat, and so a book looking through the lens of food makes for a compelling read, tying us together on a more human level than just a biography or history book. But it should have been bigger, more in-depth, and with color photographs. Not many people are in a position to write a first-person account about being the chef at the White House. The rarity of that situation, I think, deserves a much more in-depth cover of the experience, and that's why I give this four stars.

A cookbook and a fascinating read all in one! I haven't taken the time to try any of the recipes yet because I simply couldn't put the book down. The anecdotes are lively, informative, touching, and never pompous in spite of the formal setting in which the events took place. The recipes are mouth-watering and several of the dishes seem easy to prepare. Highly recommended.

As an Australian with a fascination with the White House and US Politics generally, I looked forward to reading this 'inside look' when I saw it reviewed on FOX News. The author is a hard working perfectionist chef, perfectly suited to the exacting standards of White House entertaining and the Clintons who encouraged greatness from the national residence. The menu and invitation copies were nice to see, for those who will never get an invite to the White House. The menus are all

American classics or variations on same. It was an interesting 'inside' look at domesticated Hillary Clinton and a different view to the one we are seeing now as a presidential candidate. I was also interested to read the author's perceptions of the George W Bush's, who are portrayed as dull and uninterested in food or in presenting the White House in greatness. They throw very few State dinners or events, and eat the same dull food throughout the year. I highly recommend this book.

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